

19 February 1957

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Director
FROM: Assistant to the Director
SUBJECT: OSS Records

This memorandum recommends action in paragraph 5.

1. The OSS records held by CIA could become a source of embarrassment to CIA.
2. One way of avoiding such embarrassment would be to transfer these records, except any part of them that could not under any circumstances be made public, to the National Archives where they would be available to the public without reference to CIA.
3. CIA does not possess all OSS records. By the President's Executive Order of 20 September 1945, the State Department received most data pertaining to the R&A and Presentation Branches of OSS; while CIA received most remaining OSS files via the Strategic Services Unit of the War Department, and CIG. Over the past several years, both State and CIA have retired a considerable portion of OSS records to the National Archives. Between them, State, CIA, and Archives probably hold ninety per cent of the original "corpus" of OSS records. Most of the other ten per cent could probably be accounted for, but some field records of OSS still come in from time to time to "SSU" (now represented by an office in DDP).

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4. Much of the substance of the OSS records is known to individuals who appear to be at liberty to make use of them in fiction or otherwise, without reference to CIA. Rather than being made the goat of revelations for which CIA is not responsible, it might be better to forest ourselves of all appearance of responsibility in advance.

5. Recommend transfer of OSS records, except those that may not under any circumstances be made public, to the National Archives.

STATINTL

STANLEY J. MOHAN

CC: MEMPHIS:

Date: 5 Mar 1957

Signature: See [] 25X1A

Title: Deputy Director (Intelligence)

Date: 7 Mar 57

Signature: See attached

Title: Inspector General

Date:

Signature:

Title: General Counsel

Approved. (Disapproved) By Del

Orig & att - Col Haeger
1cc - ER
1cc - DDC/
1cc - DD/P
1cc - DD/1
1cc - IC
1cc - Gen Counsel

On 22 March 1957

ALLEN W. WELLES
Director

25X1A

MAR 1 1957

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT : OSS Records

REFERENCE : Col. Grogan's memorandum of 19 February 1957

1. We have carefully reviewed the reference memorandum which proposes the declassification and transfer of OSS records, except those that may not under any circumstances be made public, to the National Archives, where they would be available to the public without reference to CIA.
2. There are two basic factors inherent in the reference proposal which require consideration - i.e. security and the Agency's reputation in the intelligence community.
3. From the security point of view, the proposal to transfer OSS records to National Archives turns on the interpretation of the clause: "... except those that may not, under any circumstances, be made public." What the nature and entity of such papers would be is not apparent nor is it possible from the facts cited in reference to make an evaluation. Whatever material is passed to Archives should be carefully screened. But to assist in making a judgment of the issues involved, a detailed survey and inventory of the materials with which reference is supposed to deal are prerequisite. Such a survey would be costly in terms of manpower, money and time and in view of existing back-logs of operational records work in the Clandestine Services in general and in HI in particular would not appear to warrant the effort which would of necessity be at the expense of current operations.
4. American intelligence, as a relative newcomer to the field, has yet to establish a firm international reputation for complete reliability and confidence. The British, for example, have achieved such a reputation and this was of considerable help to them before, during and after the last war. Our system of government is such that we have considerable difficulty in keeping the confidences of foreign services, governments, and individuals. We do not consider that it would help our overall position as an intelligence service for the long haul by making available to the public the records of what has come to be firmly established in the public mind, for better or worse, as the direct predecessor and antecedent of this organization. We believe that the Agency should be able to have foreign (and domestic) friends, associates, allies, agents, etc., feel

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confident that they can trust us not to publish twenty or thirty years from now the current records of the CIA even though twenty or thirty years from now it is not improbable that the organization will be operating under a different name and in some reorganized form.

5. For the reasons stated above we do not concur in the reference proposal.

25X1A

[REDACTED]
Chief of Operations, DD/P

cc: DDCI

Concur

I concur with [REDACTED] for the reasons he states and for two additional reasons. It is a little known fact that technically our portion of the OSS records are considered Joint Chiefs of Staff papers placed by them under our custody and control. This has been useful in that certain papers required for court purposes have been authenticated by the Army rather than by CIA. Secondly, this Office in considering claims and other matters going back to the post-war recurring need for this Archives material. It is not only readily available in its current status but we feel CIA has more control for the protection of intelligence sources and methods. Thus, in such matters as [REDACTED] we are in a better position to look after our interests in the production of OSS records than if they were turned over to National Archives. STATINTL

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25X1A
[REDACTED]
for Deputy Director Intelligence

Concurs

25X1A
[REDACTED]

INSPECTOR GENERAL

CPC
DDCI
18 MAR 57

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[REDACTED]
LAWRENCE R. HOUSTON
General Counsel

11 March 1957

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